

Blackdown Hills Parish Network

AGM Minutes and Annual Report to the Network held on Thursday 22nd June at 7.30pm Buckland St Mary Village Hall

Present:	12 parishes represented	
Steering Group:	Sarah Clark (Monkton PC)	Margaret Lee (Pitminster)
Chairperson: Heather Stallard (Hemyock PC)	Elaine Mumford (Monkton PC)	Mike Bell (Membury PC)
Catherine Bass (Culmstock, BHPN Co-ordinator)	David Mumford (Monkton PC)	Jocelyn Pritchard (Hemyock PC)
Lisa Turner (Blackdown Hills AONB)	David Gollin (Churchstanton PC)	John Brabrook (Clerk Combe Raleigh)
Ken Pearson (Clerk Stockland)	Penny Lawrence (Hemyock PC + AONB Heritage Forum)	Linda Bennett (BH AONB)
Bruce Payne (Wellington w-out & AONB Management group)	Adrian McArdle (Broadhembury)	Karen Street (Neroche)
Graham Long (Upottery PC)	Mike Canham (Otterford PC)	Lynne Spoors (Neroche)
	Alison Weekes (Clayhidon PC)	Neil Punnett (Hemyock PC)
Councillors	Debbie Burrough (Membury)	Jocelyn Pritchard (Hemyock PC)
Cllr. Andrew Moulding (DCC)	Chris Padget (Combe Raleigh PC)	
Cllr John Berry (DCC)		
Cllr Rosemary Berry (MDDC)		

1. Welcome and Introductions: The chair, Heather Stallard, welcomed everyone to the meeting

2. Minutes of 2015 AGM were agreed, there were no matters arising

3. Report on activities in the last year: In September 2015 Steering Group had met with two of the three MPs whose constituencies include the Blackdown Hills (Rebecca Pow, Cons Taunton Deane, Neil Parish, Cons Tiverton & Honiton with apologies from Marcus Fysh Cons Yeovil). Issues were raised with them that reflected the key areas of concern to parishes, Planning, Traffic/Transport and Highways and Communications. The report and outcome of the meeting have previously been circulated to all parishes and work is ongoing to take the actions.

4. Proposed amendment of the BHPN Constitution adopted May 2013.

The BHPN is an active stakeholder in the AONB Partnership. In 2015/6 the AONB invited representation from BHPN parish councils to their Management Group .

It was proposed to amend the second clause of the BHPN Constitution at Object Clause 3 which currently reads:

3 In doing this the Network will:

- Work with the AONB Partnership, other organisations (private, statutory and voluntary) and with individuals to achieve agreed aims across county, parish and district boundaries.

To the following:

- As a stakeholder, to work with the AONB Partnership, other organisations (private, statutory and voluntary) and with individuals to achieve agreed aims across county, parish and district boundaries.

Proposal approved unanimously

5. Financial report 2015-2016: The deficit for the year was £113.04 bringing the overall balance at the year end to £2,523.39 with contributions received from 17 parishes in total (6 new members being added since the previous AGM). Eleven of those members represent parishes whose boundaries are more than 50% within the Blackdown Hills AONB area, five with a 20-50% footprint and one with a footprint of less than 20% in the area. Of the eligible parishes not yet subscribing, eleven are more than 50% within, five are 20-50% within and another five are less than 20% within the boundary. Cllr Moulding commented on his surprise that only 8/20 EDDC parishes have joined, since the EDDC area holds the greatest number of parishes in the AONB catchment (20 of 38).

BHPN contd

6. Election of Steering Group 2016-2017: The chair explained that the steering group has reduced since last year following the resignation of one member (Bruce Payne, Wellington w/o) and offered a vote of thanks to him for his excellent support. She invited volunteers from the floor to join the current group comprising herself (Hemyock), Lisa Turner (AONB Planning officer), Graham Long (Upottery) and Ken Pearson (Stockland). Four volunteers came forward to join the Steering group, Mike Bell (Membury), Jocelyn Pritchard (Hemyock), Neil Punnett (Hemyock) and Alison Weekes (Clayhidon).

The existing Steering Group was re-elected unopposed together with all four new recruits.

7. AOB and date of next meeting: The next general meeting will be in November.

Following a short break, the meeting heard of the following:

Updates on

- **Redesigned BHPN website:** The co-ordinator, Catherine Bass described changes that had been made to the website and introduced the new Facebook, Diary and News features which members were encouraged to use.
- **Community Bus:** Ken Pearson (steering group and secretary of the CBO Bus group) shared the latest news about the Community Bus. Current vehicle is reaching the end of its useful life, there are plans to purchase a replacement however evidence for support and revisions to operation procedures may be needed to justify its continuation.

Application for European Regional Development Funds to enable Next Generation Access to broadband in the BHPN area Bob Nelson (Broadhembury) and Graham Long (Upottery) described the very short and intense preparation time in submitting an outline application on behalf of the BHPN to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This was for substantial funds, £4.6m, to improve Next Generation Access Broadband provision in and around the Blackdown Hills in Devon & Somerset. East Devon District Council had agreed in principle to be the BHPN's Delivery Partner in finding appropriate suppliers and managing the project.

The Department of Communities and Local Government decision on the outline application is expected in July and if successful, a full application will be submitted before the end of October with a subsequent Invitation to Tender for potential suppliers likely in early 2017. The project will be centred on parishes in the Blackdown Hills AONB but will also extend NGA Broadband coverage to parishes adjacent to the AONB, funding and technology permitting.

All agreed this was an exciting opportunity for Blackdown parishes, many of whom have missed out on the current County run broadband programme, enabling residents and businesses to have access to the technology and trade routes of the 21st century .

The chair thanked all who had been involved in the preparation of the outline application and wished them well for a successful outcome.

The meeting closed at 21.40